

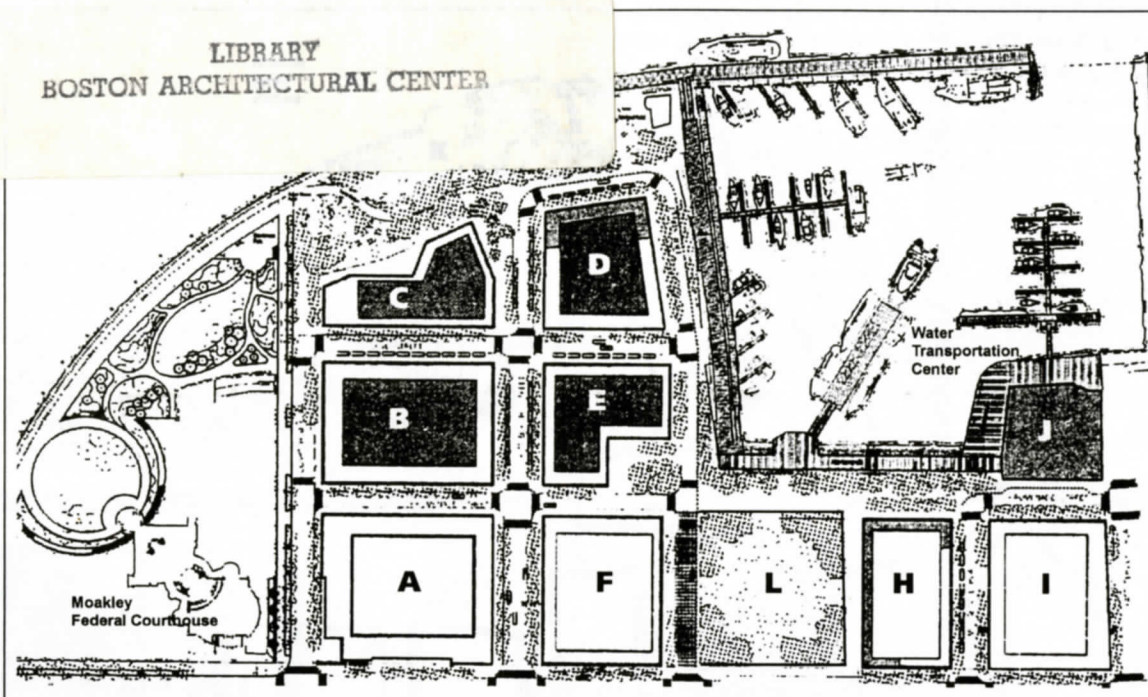
THE BOSTON INFORMER

No. 52

The newsletter for people who care about Boston

July–August 2001

LIBRARY BOSTON ARCHITECTURAL CENTER



Revised Fan Pier Development

Total size:
2.93 million s.f.

- Block A – hotel
- Blocks B, C, D, E – residential
- Blocks F, H, I – office
- Block J – Institute of Contemporary Art
- Block K – Fan Pier Park
- Block L – Public Green

Source: Fan Pier Land Co. FEIR/FPIR

The Fan Pier Land Company, the development company of the Pritzker family of Hyatt Hotel fame, published its latest plans for South Boston's Fan Pier. The Final Environmental Impact Report/Final Project Impact Report (FEIR/FPIR) was filed July 31, 2001.

The Fan Pier plan has changed to respond to conditions laid out by Environmental Affairs Secretary Durand in his approval of the South Boston Municipal Harbor Plan of December 2000.

The proposed project has evolved significantly since the Draft EIR was filed in April 2001 and since the Project Notification Form was filed in November 1999. Comparisons between plans include:

- One hotel (E) has changed to residential. The number of buildings—eight plus a site for a new Institute of Contemporary Art to be built by others—remains the same.
- The number of hotel rooms has shrunk to 650 from 800–850.
- The count of residential units is up to 675 units from 450–525.
- Office space has changed to 1.22 million s.f. from 1.38 million s.f.
- Retail space has shrunk to 134,420 s.f. from 249,560 s.f.
- Overall commercial space has been reduced to 2.93 million s.f. from 3.37 million s.f.
- Building heights range from 175 feet to 244 feet, down from the DEIR and PNF where the range was 144–298 feet.
- The total number of parking spaces—2,285 underground and 40 surface—is essentially unchanged.
- The Fan Pier Park at the water's edge has been increased to 83,000 s.f. from 58,000 s.f. and the Public Green on Northern Avenue has been widened to 270 feet from 148 feet.

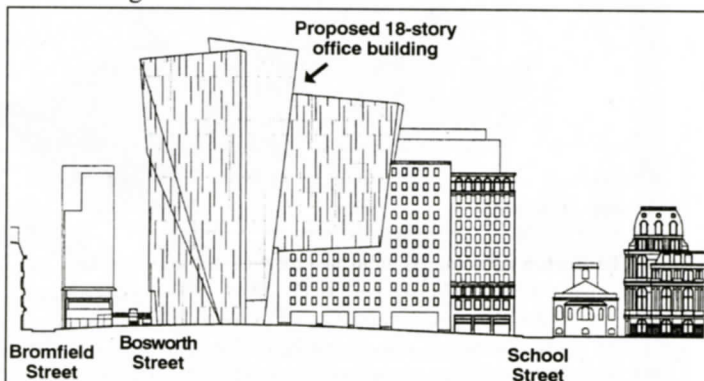
Efforts are now to complete permitting. Construction schedules will be subject to market conditions. The market will also determine whether the west side (residential) or the east side (office) of the development is built first.

For copies of the FEIR/FPIR call Stacy Erikson, Epsilon Associates, 978-897-7100. The FEIR comment period ends September 7, 2001, and comments on the City of Boston FPIR close October 17, 2001.

45 Province Street Office Building—The Abbey Group has proposed to demolish the existing 125-foot-high mechanical garage on Province Street and build a 220-foot-high, 18-story office building. The development would have 218,780 s.f. of space and a 440-space, seven-level underground garage. The ground floor would be restaurant and/or retail. The existing mechanical garage contains 305 spaces. After construction the developer would restore the adjacent historic Province House steps and The Littlest Bar to their current configuration.

Previous proposals for developing the site in 1989 called for a 14-story building and a 19-story residential/hotel development in 1998. Both were abandoned because abutters objected to proposed zoning waivers.

Architects for the current proposal: Bruner/Cott and Associates of Cambridge.



The Abbey Group is proposing a 220-foot, 18-story office building with seven levels of underground parking to replace the mechanical garage at 45 Province Street. Remains of historic steps to luxurious homes of governors at Bosworth Street will be returned to their current configuration after construction.

Source: Abbey Group, Bruner/Cott

Spotlight on Cambridge Street

People Movers

David Black, from TAMS Consultants to VHB.
Ed Mahoney, from H. W. Lochner to Stone and Webster.
Len Ruszczyk, from Gannett Fleming to Stone and Webster.
Fran Beatty, from Boston Parks and Recreation Department to head of landscape architecture at University of Arkansas.
Richard Heath is a housing organizer at Urban Edge Housing Corp.
Maureen Cavanaugh, from DMJM + Harris to Epsilon Associates.
Brad Mills, formerly of FST, to Goodkind & O'Dea, Inc.
Paul Schimek, president of MassBike, to Boston Transportation Dept.
Robert Prince is retiring as MBTA General Manager.
Eric Botterman resigned as MBTA chief of engineering and construction.
Robert Varney to New England Regional Director for the EPA.
Robert Kiley, former MBTA and New York MTA general manager, fired by the British government from commissioner of London Transport for opposing privatization of London's Underground.

Mass. General Hospital



Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) is proceeding with its plan for a new ambulatory care center (466,700 net new s.f.), underground garage and 300-room hotel. The first phase (early 2004 completion date) will include demolition of part of the former Charles Street Jail, designed by Gridley J. F. Bryant in 1844.

The ambulatory care center will be completed in phase 2 and will require demolition of three MGH buildings. The project will add 475 parking spaces for the approximately 300 additional employees. MGH previously had added only 70 parking spaces for 2,500 new employees between 1998-2000. Architect: Cambridge Seven Associates & Michael Fieldman, Architect. Rendering by Randall Imai.

Charles River Plaza



The Davis Companies' plans to redevelop the Charles River Plaza include new retail, including a Bread and Circus grocery store to replace the current Stop & Shop, and two new buildings. The new five- and six-story buildings will be on the north and south sides of the plaza for an addition of 430,000 s.f. The buildings will be used for office/laboratory/research and development. The existing 954 parking spaces will be maintained. New retail on Cambridge Street will help unify the Cambridge Street streetscape. Architect: Tsoi/Kobus & Associates.



Pemberton Square State Courthouses—The "old" or "historic" courthouse is now empty and undergoing a complete inside and out renovation. When finished in 2003 the Supreme Judicial Court, the State Appeals Court and the Social Law Library will move in.

The high-rise ("new") courthouse became known as a "sick building" some years ago after weatherproofing work. The Suffolk Superior Court and later the Boston Municipal Court moved out to the former federal courthouse McCormack Building in Post Office Square. The lease with the federal General Services Administration terminates in 2004, and no firm plans have been made as to whether they can stay or where they might go. Also, no decision has been made public about the future of the high-rise courthouse.

Mass. General

Blossom St

Cambridge Street

Stanford Street

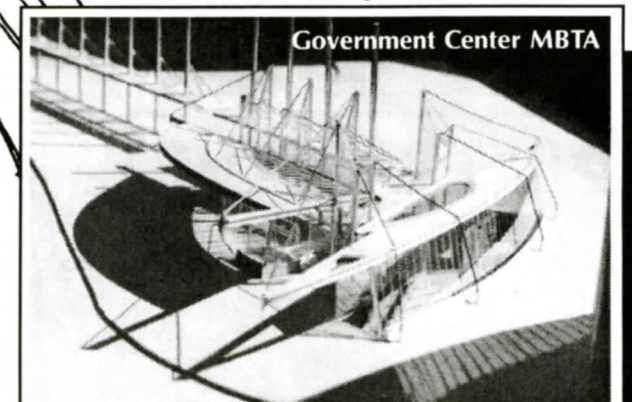
New Chardon Street

City Hall Plaza—There are no current plans for any further work on City Hall Plaza or any changes on the width of Cambridge Street at City Hall Plaza. The General Services Administration (GSA) did not get funding approved for the proposed gardens around the front and side of the JFK Building. The GSA will try again for the coming year. In the meantime in front of the JFK Building has become a blacktop parking lot eyesore.

JFK Building

City Hall

Government Center MBTA



Efforts to make the MBTA Government Center station handicapped accessible by 2003 are slowly moving forward. The \$18 million project involves installing an elevator, escalators, new stairs, expanding fare collection and lobby areas, raising the platforms, and making significant aesthetic improvements to headhouse and platforms. At 30 percent design in March, the MBTA hopes to begin construction spring 2002 and complete most of the work in December 2003. The new station will be a contemporary glass and steel pavilion-like structure that will allow daylight onto the platform area. Architect: Thomas Design Associates/SYSTRA.



Cambridge Street Reconstruction—The Massachusetts Highway Department finally advertised the reconstruction of Cambridge Street on September 8! The \$5.84 million project was part of the City's 1996 Boston Boulevard Project to use state and federal funds to rebuild and change the character of major streets. On Cambridge Street, improving pedestrian safety and the visual quality are major goals. Sidewalks and the median will be widened, the number of travel lanes will be reduced, a permanent parking lane added westbound, and brick sidewalks. The median will have planters for trees.

Despite the efforts of several City agencies to develop streetscape and street reconstruction guidelines that balance the needs of pedestrian, autos and bicycles, the Cambridge Street plan does not adhere to most of the key guidelines. Travel lanes will be dangerously narrow for bicycles, neckdowns are bigger than city standards and parking lanes are bigger than standard. Construction could begin in early 2002 and could take up to two years.

100 Cambridge St.



The Boston Redevelopment Authority has approved development plans for the former Saltonstall Building at 100 Cambridge St. by MassDevelopment, a quasi-public agency. The project will completely refurbish the 22-story office building and add a new five-story building with 75 residential units and ground-floor retail along Somerset, Bowdoin and Cambridge streets. The garage will have 466 parking spaces.

State agencies will occupy floors 2 through 12 and it is hoped that private sector tenants will lease the rest. The \$181 million development, including asbestos abatement, new construction and renovation, is expected to take 20-24 months, opening in 2003. Architect: Elkus/Manfredi Architects, Ltd.

State House

Suffolk University

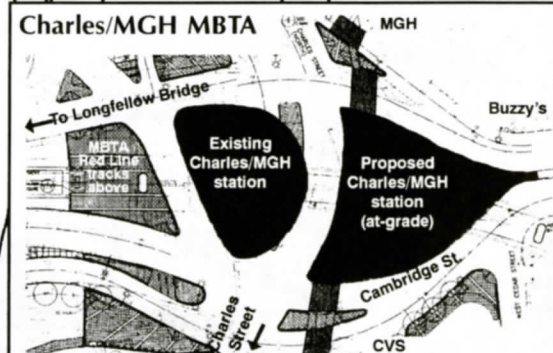


Following the lead of other universities committed to housing more of their students, Suffolk University has proposed a 19-story dormitory on Somerset Street, adjacent to its Frank Sawyer Building on Ashburton Place. The dormitory would replace a 38-space parking lot owned by Carol Sawyer, whose taxi-mogul father was a Suffolk benefactor. The dormitory would house approximately 420 students and would feature fabulous views of the Charles River and Back Bay. No parking will be provided. Suffolk hopes to begin construction in February 2002 for occupancy in September 2003. Architect: Cannon Design.

Longfellow Bridge—Repairs to the Longfellow Bridge were included as a Central Artery/Tunnel mitigation requirement in the 1991 environmental approvals. However, this requirement was eliminated in 1994 when the Charles River Bridge Design Review process was going on.

Currently the Metropolitan District Commission, owners of the Longfellow Bridge, are planning to advertise a contract this fall for work costing about \$4 million, with \$2.5 million to \$3 million for structural steel repairs and the remainder for general cleaning (including graffiti) and repointing the of the bridge towers. Lighting and railings will be not be renovated. Work could start as early as spring 2002.

Charles/MGH MBTA



Plans for a new MBTA Red Line Charles/MGH station call for it to be located at ground level and shifted several hundred feet east of the existing station on Cambridge Street. The existing overhead pedestrian walkways will be eliminated and the bunker-like station will be replaced by a handicapped-accessible, contemporary-design station. Pedestrians crossing from the sidewalk at CVS will have to cross first to a pedestrian island and then to the station. Construction is expected to start in March 2003. Architect: Elkus/Manfredi Architects, Ltd.

Welcome to The Boston Informer!

The goal is simple: provide concise public information on construction projects, planning initiatives, and whatever else affects living and working in Boston. Welcome to *The Boston Informer*!

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The Boston Informer is available by mail only. \$25.00 per year (cheap!). Questions? Telephone (617) 723-7030, fax (617) 437-1886 or e-mail: 103477.556@compuserve.com.



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John Q. Public searching for a meeting at which real decisions are made.

You were asking...

- Q. If the Central Artery/Tunnel project took two years to address a quality control and safety problem in the construction of the Leonard Zakim Bridge despite admonitions from the bridge architect, should we be concerned about the quality control on the rest of the project?
- A. Yes.
- Q. I read in a recent (8/6/01) Engineering News Record that the original CA/T cost estimate for the contract to demolish the old overhead roadway and lay out the new surface streets was \$407 million, but was upped to \$440 million to allow for overtime costs because the project is so far behind schedule. So is the winning low bid of \$415 million such a bargain after all?
- A. Apparently not.
- Q. After reading The Boston Informer, I was hoping the proposed Clippership Wharf project in East Boston would be a model for new development to minimize the parking provided in transit-accessible areas. Now I hear it'll be no different from the rest. True?
- A. Yes. In the June 2001/No. 51 issue of The Boston Informer, a senior reporter erroneously stated that the Clippership Wharf project planned only 200 parking spaces for 400 condominium units, or 0.5 spaces per unit. The correct number is 670 parking spaces or 1.5 spaces per unit plus 70 spaces for public use. The Environmental Notification Form for Clippership Wharf has been filed (copies from Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, 617-924-1770). Comments are accepted through September 4, 2001.

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